

Anime and Manga: Critical Approaches

EALL S260, Section 1

Summer 2025

Meeting Information

Tbd

Location: Tbd

Instructor

Kurtis Hanlon (he, him, his)

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Humanities Quadrangle, room 118

Office Hours

Dedicated office hours for this course: Tbd

Also available by appointment:

In-person, Tbd

Zoom, Tbd

Course Description

In this course we will analyze manga (Japanese comics) and anime (Japanese animation). The course will incorporate a range of genres of manga and anime that target a variety of audiences, and for each text we consider the question of who consumes it and why.

We will learn about the distinctive media characteristics of manga and of anime, and their intermedial connections and contexts. We will practice analyzing manga and anime texts not simply as narratives but as narratives mediated through specific technologies with specific visual vocabulary.

Drawing on assigned readings, we will use a number of analytical perspectives in the course, including those coming from the disciplines of literary studies, visual culture studies, anthropology, and history, and from the interdisciplinary fields of gender and sexuality studies, and globalization studies.

The major units of this course will incorporate notions of play into the discussion of the texts, both in the narrative subject matter and the use of media-specific conventions. The texts will be loosely gathered into three units: Adaptation (playing with the past); Who am I? (playing with identity); and War Games (playing with the future).

Format

The primary form of instruction will be in-person lectures. As such, the majority of the activities in this course will be synchronous, but there are a few available assignments that will be available asynchronously on Canvas, outlined below.

Required Materials

This course will utilize a variety of primary sources of Japanese manga/anime in translation, which will be provided on Canvas. Any required secondary sources will be made available via digital reserves on Canvas.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- LO 1. Enumerate the broad genres of Japanese manga and anime
- LO 2. Distinguish the visual vocabulary of various genres of manga and anime, and interpret who is the likely target audience
- LO 3. Analyze visual and audio cues from manga and anime to support an argument about how the visual vocabulary creates meaning
- LO 4. Produce an argumentative essay or creative project that comments on a manga or anime of their choice and explains how it relates to the themes covered in the course

Assessments

Because student agency is an important factor in creating a learning environment that is engaging for multiple types of learners, the instructor has designed this course under the principles of what he terms “gamified grading.”

In theory, this means that students will have a certain degree of agency in determining how they earn their grade. Similar to how a player of a Role-Playing Game decides how to invest their resources to succeed at the game, students will decide how to invest their time and energy to succeed in the course.

In practice, this means that there will be a variety of assignments and assessments totaling 110%. Students will be able to set their own grade goal for the course and decide how to reach that goal. As students complete assignments and earn points, they are moving closer to their grade goal. Every assignment **except for the final** is therefore technically optional, allowing students to focus on assignment types they find engaging. Students will strategize on what they must complete to earn the points needed to reach their grade goal (The instructor recommends completing at least enough assignments to total 100%).

The available assignments are weighted as follows:

- Online discussions – 10%
- In-class contributions – 5%

- Manga/Anime reviews – 5%
- Office Hour Discussions – 5%
- Pop Quizzes – 10%
- Manga Quizzes – 20%
- Anime Quizzes – 20%
- Short Papers – 20%
- **Final** – 15%

An optional “score sheet” will be provided at the end of this document to help students set their goals for the course and plot their progress toward those goals. It is provided simply for ease of tracking progress and its use is not required in any way.

Online Discussions (LO 1, 2, 3): Semi-weekly discussion questions will be posted on Canvas. These discussions will be open-ended questions that allow the students to share their opinions and analysis of the texts discussed that week. Questions will be released on Tuesdays and Thursdays after class, and will be due two days later. Each discussion will be worth 2 points and the top 5 out of 11 scores will be counted. Full marks will require a meaningful response to a classmate’s post.

In-class Contributions (LO 2, 3): Class sessions will include open discussions which will elicit opinions and ideas from students. Students will receive 1 point for their first meaningful contribution of a class session, up to a maximum of 5 points for the term.

Manga/Anime Reviews (LO 1, 4): A survey of manga and anime is not enough to fully cover the wide swath of texts available out there. With this assignment, students will be able to post a 300–500 word review of a manga or anime of their choice that is **not** covered in the course, each worth 2.5 points. They will need to write a concise synopsis, introduction to the major characters, and why they would recommend it to their classmates. There will be 3 opportunities to post a review during the term, and the top 2 scores will be counted.

Office Hour Discussions (LO 2, 3): Office hours are a place to ask for clarification on ideas and texts covered in the course, but they are also an opportunity to continue conversations started in class or start new ones with your instructor. If a student attends office hours and **actively leads a discussion on a topic of their choosing**, they will receive a grade out of 2.5 for how actively they participated in and led the discussion. Visits where students simply ask clarifying questions or for feedback/help will **not** be counted towards this assignment type. The first 3 such visits will be graded, and the top 2 scores will be counted.

Pop Quizzes (LO 1): At random intervals during the term, the instructor will provide quizzes during lectures worth 2 points apiece about the assigned grammar points and texts covered in class. If a student does not have access to a device to use the PollEverywhere service, they can write their answers on a scrap of paper with their name and student number and submit it to the instructor when the quiz is over. There will be 8 quizzes scattered throughout the term, and the top 5 scores will be counted.

Manga Quizzes (LO 2, 3): Twice during the term students will be asked to do an in-class analysis of an excerpt from a manga previously covered in class, using the media analysis methods previously practiced. They will be graded on their ability to correctly describe the visual elements on the page and explain how those elements create meaning. Each quiz will be worth 10 points.

Anime Quizzes (LO 2, 3): Twice during the term students will be asked to do an in-class analysis of a clip from a previously viewed anime film/TV show, using the media analysis methods previously practiced. They will be graded on their ability to correctly describe the visual elements on the screen and explain how those elements create meaning and relate the clip to the larger significance of the anime. Each quiz will be worth 10 points.

Short Papers (LO 2, 3, 4): Twice during the term topics will be given for a short paper. Students will write a **short** paper (550-800 words) on the assigned topic. The topic will include an indication of which primary works (manga/anime) and which secondary works are to be addressed. Take this opportunity to practice good citation style, which will be essential on your final paper/project. Each short paper will be worth 10 points.

Final (Paper/Project/Exam) due during the exam period (LO 1, 2, 3, 4): For the final, students will have the option of choosing one from the following three options.

Papers (1000-1500 words) will be on a topic of the student's choosing (after consultation with and approval by the instructor), and will present a reasoned argument, using at least some of the analytical tools learned in class, about one or more anime or manga texts. Students must use secondary works to support their arguments, including at least one not included in the *required* readings for the course. (The *recommended* readings for the course are fine to use as your secondary source.)

Project proposals will be considered in place of an analytical paper. Examples of possible projects include creating an original (short) manga, computer animation, using some other creative format to create a short narrative, or creating some sort of publicly accessible form of knowledge about the topic of your choice, like a youtube video or a wikipedia page. Creative pieces must, however, demonstrate an engagement with the ideas and issues addressed in the class, and must also incorporate at least one secondary source not included in the *required* readings for the course. (It's fine to use one or more of the *recommended* readings.) **If you plan to propose a project rather than a paper, it is advisable to consult with the instructor early in the course.**

Exams will be offered on the last day of instruction and will consist of a longer version of the anime quizzes encountered during the term.

Grading

Rubrics will be provided on Canvas for each of the assignments. Each assignment is slightly different, but there are some guiding principles for the rubrics:

- Analysis over Summary: rather than a summary of factual information, rubrics will assess how well a student presents the visual evidence from the anime or manga and how well they explain how those visual details create meaning.
- Structure of an argument: many assignments will require students to make an argument and support it with evidence from the text. Rubrics will assess how well the student structures the flow of that argument and organizes their ideas to prove it.
- Engagement with the texts: rubrics will assess if the students simply read and understood the texts or if they thought about and engaged deeply with the subject matter, the visuals, and how the two interact.
- Ideas over language skills: Although longer writing assignments will have rubrics that include proper writing style and polish, rubrics will be skewed more towards the ideas that are presented rather than the grammar used to present it. Not everyone is a native English speaker, and the graders have much experience overlooking simple errors as long as the logic of the ideas is understandable.

Assignments for this course will be given numerical grades, which will allow students to more easily keep track of their standing in the course. Individual **assignments** and **final grades** correspond to letter grades as follows:

A	90-100
A-	85-89
B+	80-84
B	76-79
B-	72-75
C+	68-71
C	64-67
C-	60-63
D	55-59
D-	50-54
F	0-49

Course Policies

Late Policy

In order to ensure that you are able to earn the points you work for, all assignments (**except the final**) will be accepted **up to 2 days after the deadline** without a score penalty, with a 10% deduction each day it is late after that.

The penalty, however, for turning in work after the deadline is that the instructor **will not** provide feedback to help you improve for next time. Providing feedback takes a lot of time and effort and will only be provided to assignments that are turned in on time.

Covid/Sickness/Bereavement Policy

In the pandemic situation, advice on public measures changes frequently. Mask wearing in all indoor public spaces is encouraged to reduce the transmission of COVID and other illnesses as well as protect vulnerable persons. These spaces include classrooms, residence halls, libraries, and common areas.

If you are sick, it is important that you stay home.

View guidelines on what to do if you test positive for COVID here: <https://campushealth.yale.edu/covid-19-information>. In this class, the marking scheme is intended to provide flexibility so that you can prioritize your health and still succeed.

If you miss class because of illness:

Make a connection early in the term to another student or a group of students in the class. You can help each other by sharing notes. If you don't yet know anyone in the class, post on the discussion forum to connect with other students.

If you are feeling ill and cannot attend class for a midterm or in-class assessment:

Please email the instructor right away. If you arrive for a test and you are clearly ill, we will make alternate arrangements with you. It is better to email ahead of time and not attend.

If you are feeling ill at the time of a final exam:

Do not attend the exam. Alternative arrangements will be made according to Yales policies.

As an instructor, if I am feeling ill:

I will not come to class. I will make every reasonable attempt to communicate plans for class as soon as possible [by email, on Canvas, etc.]. In most instances, our classroom will still be available for you to sit in and attend an online session. In this instance, alternate arrangements will be made and you will receive a notice via Canvas or email with further information.

Learning Analytics

Learning analytics includes the collection and analysis of data about learners to improve teaching and learning. This course will be using the following learning technologies: Canvas, Zoom, PollEverywhere. Many of these tools capture data about your activity and provide information that can be used to improve the quality of teaching and learning. In this course, I plan to use analytics data to:

- View overall class progress
- Track your progress in order to provide you with personalized feedback
- Review statistics on course content being accessed to support improvements in the course
- Track participation in discussion forums
- Assess your participation in the course

Lectures And Intellectual Property

The **lectures** I give in this course, and the **slides** I use in support of the lectures, are **my intellectual property**, and as such are **protected by law**. That protection applies to the slides themselves, and your

transcription (e.g. copying word-for-word) of the slides (whether or not you've added annotations). Permission to make recordings falls within my discretion as the instructor as informed by instructional purposes, classroom order, property interests, and other reasonable considerations arising in the academic context. If I do authorize you to record a lecture, the recording may only be used for the purpose of individual or group study, or for other non-commercial purposes that reasonably arise from your membership in this class. Lecture slides and recordings of this class may not be exchanged for any commercial purpose, for compensation, or for any purpose other than your personal study. Unless authorized by me in advance and explicitly, any other commercial or any non-personal use of slides or recordings constitutes a misuse of my intellectual property.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a core university value that ensures respect for the academic reputation of the University, its students, faculty and staff, and the degrees it confers. The University expects that students will conduct themselves in an honest and ethical manner and respect the intellectual work of others. Please ask about my expectations regarding permissible or encouraged forms of student collaboration if they are unclear. In translation, specifically, collaboration can be an essential component to producing good final products, but each collaborator must complete all the required work themselves for this course.

Any work that you submit at any stage of the writing process – thesis, outline, draft, bibliography, final submission, presentations, blog posts, and more – must be your own; in addition, any words, ideas, or data that you borrow from other people and include in your work must be properly documented, including work produced by generative AI. Failure to do either of these things is plagiarism. I seek to protect the rights and intellectual property of all students, writers, and scholars by insisting that individual students act with integrity.

Academic integrity requires that students at Yale acknowledge all of the sources that inform their coursework. Most commonly, this means (a) citing the sources of any text or data that you include in papers and projects, and (b) only collaborating with other students or using tools such as generative AI in ways that are explicitly endorsed by the assignment. Yale's dedication to academic integrity flows from our two primary commitments: supporting research and educating students to contribute to ongoing scholarship. A safe and ethical climate for research demands that previous authors and artists receive credit for their work. And learning requires that you do your own work. Conventions for acknowledging sources vary across disciplines, and instructors should instruct you in the forms they expect; they should also delineate which forms of collaboration among students are permitted. But ultimately it is the student's responsibility to act with integrity, and the burden is on you to ask questions if anything about course policies is unclear.

Generative AI Policy

For the past several years, I have searched for a way to incorporate AI into my classrooms in a way that does not interfere with the students obtaining the skills outlined in the learning objectives of the syllabus. However, with the way that so-called generative AI (as opposed to assistive AI) has developed, its use has

not only turned out to be antithetical to students obtaining the skills I want them to, but also fundamentally immoral for the following non-exhaustive list of reasons:

- Generative AI uses an unsustainable amount of water and electricity to run, and so its use in my courses would hasten the climate crisis we are already experiencing.
- Most (if not all) LLMs are built off of stolen intellectual property, and so their use in my courses would be a violation of intellectual rights and also blatant plagiarism.
- Many major generative AI platforms have already begun feeding AI generated text back into their products, which has degraded the quality of their outputs. Their use in my courses would require students to take far more time editing and fact checking the generated output than the course is designed to take, which would inequitably disadvantage students for whom English is not their first language.

For the above reasons (and others), I have decided that the use of generative AI platforms (platforms that produce text or image from a prompt, like ChatGPT or Dall-E) will generally be prohibited. Assistive AI platforms (platforms that sift through large databases to recognize patterns, such as Google Lens) are generally allowed to be used. If you are unsure if a particular platform is considered to be generative or assistive AI, please check with the instructor.

However, for accessibility considerations, if you feel you have a genuine need to use a generative AI platform as an assistive technology, the instructor reserves the right to grant you special permission to use it if you adequately prove its use as an assistive technology. In such cases, you will be required to cite the tool in your references and save a text log of all outputs in case they are requested.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging

This class strives to be an inclusive community, learning from the many perspectives that come from having differing backgrounds and beliefs. As a community, we aim to be respectful to all. We reject all forms of prejudice and discrimination, including but not limited to those based on age, color, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, and veteran status. Faculty and students are expected to commit to creating an environment that facilitates inquiry and self-expression, while also demonstrating diligence in understanding how others' viewpoints may be different from their own.

Accessibility

Your success in this class is important to me. We will all need accommodations because we all learn differently. If there are aspects of this course that prevent you from learning or that form barriers to your inclusion, please let me know as soon as possible. Together we'll develop strategies that can enable you to succeed in the course. I encourage you to visit [Student Accessibility Services](#) to determine how you could improve your learning as well. If you need official accommodations, you have a right to have these met. There is also a range of resources on campus, including the [Writing Center](#), [Residential College Tutors](#), and [Academic Strategies](#).

Academic & Wellness Supports

The university has a plethora of resources for students to utilize to meet their academic goals and to address the non-cognitive factors that lead to success in coursework. The following may be helpful for students in this course:

Writing Tutoring (Yale College)

<https://poorvucenter.yale.edu/undergraduates/writing-tutoring-and-programs>

The Yale College Writing Center offers 3 free, one-on-one writing tutoring programs for all Yale undergrads. Residential College Writing Tutors and drop-in Writing Partners can work with you at any point in the writing process to discuss any piece of writing you're working on. International students and other eligible students can also be matched with the same writing partner for multiple sessions. Contact Paula Rawlins, Assistant Director for Undergraduate Writing and Tutoring, for more information: paula.rawlins@yale.edu

Academic Strategies Program (Yale College)

<https://poorvucenter.yale.edu/academic-strategies-program>

Through workshops, small peer mentor groups, and 1-1 mentoring sessions, the Academic Strategies Program offers support to help you thrive academically at Yale. Topics we discuss include transitioning to college-level courses, time management, strategies for reading, approaching problem sets, and studying for exams, and navigating Yale's hidden curriculum—the set of unwritten rules and expectations unique to Yale's institutional culture. Academic Strategies also offers coaching support for students with learning differences, disabilities, and other conditions that can affect learning. For more information, join the [ASP YaleConnect page](#) or contact them at academic.strategies@yale.edu

Yale College Community Care (YC3)

<https://yalecollege.yale.edu/getting-help/yale-college-community-care>

YC3 is a program available to undergraduates to support their mental health and wellness. In addition to the treatment that remains available to students in the department of Mental Health and Counseling, the YC3 program offers students options for support through its College Care Clinicians and Community Wellness Specialists. All of them meet with individual students and with groups. Along with their own services, they provide a pathway for students who are thinking about pursuing more formal, ongoing therapy through Mental Health and Counseling. Students can schedule YC3 appointments directly.

Yale Well (All Students)

Yale Well is the student wellness program for Yale University. It serves as a centralized resource for students to learn how to improve their well-being and manage stress, identify clinical resources, and find community. For more information, visit yalewell.yale.edu.

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Dr. Sharalyn Orbaugh, Dr. Christina Laffin, Dr. Anna Stiles-Hanlon, and Haley Blum for their support and examples.

Syllabi found online by Drs. Satoru Saito and Ian Condry were referenced as well during the creation of this syllabus.

Course Schedule Overview

The following is a projected schedule of the topics to be covered during the course.

- Week 1:
 - Day 1: *Course Introduction; Japanese History; History of Manga*
 - Works covered: *Lost World, Hetalia: Axis Powers, Crimson Hero*
 - Day 2: *Problematic Issues in the study of manga and anime; manga as communications medium; Manga aesthetics and genre*
 - Works covered: *Ashita no Joe, Black Butler, All You Need is Kill, Princess Knight, Naruto, Puella Magi Madoka Magica*
- Week 2:
 - Day 1: *History of technology and anime; The cinematic vs. the anime-ic; Adaptations*
 - Works covered: *Various anime clips on Canvas*
 - Day 2: *Adaptation of foreign stories; Adaptation of domestic classics*
 - Works covered: *Dragonball, Cinderella, The Tale of Genji: Dreams at Dawn*
- Week 3:
 - Day 1: *The Tale of the Princess Kaguya*
 - Works covered: *The Tale of the Princess Kaguya (film), Queen Millennia, Sailor Moon*
 - Day 2: *Identity*
 - Works covered: *Boy Princess, Ouran Highschool Host Club, Revolutionary Girl Utena, Day of Revolution, Wandering Son*
- Week 4:
 - Day 1: *Your Name; Abjection*
 - Works covered: *your name (film), BnA, Beastars, Naruto*
 - Day 2: *War Games; War and Trauma*
 - Works covered: *Space Battleship Yamato, Mobile Suit Gundam The Origin, Mobile Police Patlabor, Gurren Lagann, Akira*
- Week 5:
 - Day 1: *Summer Wars*
 - Works covered: *Summer Wars (film)*
 - Day 2: *Finish War Games; anime and manga as transnational genres; course wrap up*
 - Works covered: *Scott Pilgrim, Bizenghast*